

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

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P 140240Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3628

INFO COMUSSAG NKP THAILAND PRIORITY

CINCPAC HONOLULU PRIORITY

COMIPAC HONOLULU PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 2849

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS VS

SUBJECT: MILITARY SITUATION IN MR 3

FOLLOWING TEL RECEIVED FROM BIEN HOA MARCH 13 SENT ACTION

EMBASSY SAIGON INFO USDAO SAIGON H/W REPEATED TO YOU. QTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L BIEN HOA 154

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, VS

SUBJ: MILITARY SITUATION IN MR3

REF: BIEN HOA 151

1. THIS MESSAGE IS BASED ON CONVERSATION WITH MR3 CHIEF OF STAFF AT 1000 HOURS MAR 13. THE NEW THRUSTS AGAINST SOUTHERN TAY NINH WEST OF THE VAM CO DONG RIVER AT BEN CAO AND ALONG ROUTE 1 BOTH SEEMED TO BE IN HAND ON THE MORNING OF MAR 13. THE RF HELD AT BEN CAO AGAINST FURTHER ATTACKS BEGINNING ABOUT 1600 HOURS MAR 12 AND THE GVN OUTPOST AT AN THANH ON ROUTE 1 NEAR THE CAMBODIAN BORDER REMAINS IN GVN CONTROL. MINH THOUGHT THE POCKET OF NVA/VC ATTACKERS JUST WEST OF GO DAU HA HAD BEEN CLEANED
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UP SINCE A MORTAR ATTACK OF MAR 11 ON GO DAU HA DID NOT RECUR ON

THE NIGHT OF MAR 12.

2. MORE DISTURBING, HOWEVER, WAS THE OUTBREAK MAR 13 OF NEW ATTACKS ALONG A 5-10 KM SECTION OF ROUTE 22 TO TAY NINH BEGINNING JUST NORTH OF GO DAU HA. THIS SECTION OF THE HIGHWAY HAS BEEN BROUGHT UNDER BOTH ABF AND GROUND ATTACKS WITH NVA/VC FORCES SPOTTED ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ROAD. (OUR AIR AMERICA HELICOPTER RUN TO TAY NINH TODAY TURNED BACK TWICE UPON REACHING THIS AREA--ABOUT XT3631--BECAUSE OF INTENSIVE ARTILLERY FIRE IMPACTING IN THAT AREA. THE HELICOPTER EVENTUALLY PROCEEDED TO TAY NINH FLYING A COURSE OVER THE ROAD AT 8,000-10,000 FT.) THE 46TH REGT, 25TH ARVN DIV, WILL JOIN THE RF IN FURTHER EFFORTS TO CLEAR ROUTE 22 WHICH HAS NOT BEEN OPEN TO RESUPPLY THE 25TH DIV AND OTHER GVN FORCES IN THE TAY NINH CITY AREA SINCE THE NIGHT OF SATURDAY MAR 9.

3. COL MINH, WHO HAD JUST BEEN WITH THE MR3 COMMANDER, SAID THAT AN NVA STRATEGY OF CUTTING ROUTE 1/22 AROUND GO DAU HA WITH HEAVY PRESSURE FROM NORTH AND SOUTH SEEMS TO BE EMERGING. IN THIS REGARD, HE EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THE OTHER SIDE MAY NOW MAKE SUBSTANTIAL ATTACKS ON ROUTE 1 IN THE CU CHI AREA TO EXTEND ROAD INTERDICTIONS AND FURTHER INTERDICT RESUPPLY OF THE SIZEABLE GVN TROOP CONCENTRATIONS IN TAY NINH PROVINCE. DEFENSE OF ROUTE 1 IN THE CU CHI AREA MUST REMAIN IN THE HANDS OF THE RF SINCE ARVN FORCES ARE COMMITTED ELSEWHERE. MINH THOUGHT THAT AN ASSAULT ON TAY NINH CITY WOULD NOT COME UNTIL THE ROAD CUTS ON ROUTE 1/22 HAD FURTHER ISOLATED TAY NINH.

4. MINH CONFIRMED THAT THE 7TH RANGER GROUP HAD BEEN LOST TO MR2 ON THE NIGHT OF MAR 12, AND THAT THE 48TH REGT WHICH HAD BEEN IN RESERVE AT LONG BINH BASE HAD MOVED TO PHU HOA, BINH DUONG PROVINCE, TO TRY TO BLOCK SAPPER INFILTRATIONS STRONGLY SUSPECTED TO BE IN PROGRESS FROM PHU HOA INTO HOC MON TO MENACE THE SAIGON AREA. ONE BATTALION OF THE 48TH WAS MOVED WEST OF GO DAU HA MAR 12 AND A SECOND BATTALION WILL GO INTO A TAY NINH RESERVE STATUS AT GO DAU HA DURING THE DAY MAR 13.

5. MINH PRIVATELY EXPRESSED SOME CONCERN THAT WITH EASTERN BINH DUONG PROVINCE NOW DEVOID OF ARVN FORCES THERE MAY BE NVA/VC ATTEMPTS TO MOVE IN THAT AREA TOWARD SAIGON DURING THE COMING

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PERIOD. HE THOUGHT, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT THE 165TH REGT, 7TH NVA DIV, WITH WHICH GVN LOST CONTACT MORE THAN THREE WEEKS AGO, MIGHT WELL BE IN ITS USUAL LAIR SOUTH OF PHU GIAO AND NOW MOVE SOUTHWESTWARD TOWARD SAIGON AND POSSIBLY ATTACK TAN UYEN IN BIEN HOA PROVINCE ENROUTE.

6. MINH FORESAW THAT NVA/VC ATTACKS IN THE EAST WILL BEGIN WITHIN A WEEK WITH THE 209TH, 33RD, AND 274TH NVA REGTS ATTACKING

ROUTE 20, ROUTE 1 AND THE HOAI DUC AREA IN LONG KHANH AND BINH
TUY WHICH ARE NOW DEFENDED ONLY BY THE 43RD AND 52ND REGTS OF
THE 18TH ARVN DIV PLUS RF FORCES. PETERS UNQTE
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